

Movement difficulties, quality of life, and coping in adults

How coordination difficulties relate to wellbeing and coping, beyond ADHD and autism traits

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? Why does this research matter?

Many adults experience difficulties with coordination, such as being clumsy, struggling with handwriting, or finding physical tasks harder than others do. These difficulties can affect daily life, confidence, and emotional wellbeing. However, coordination difficulties often overlap with ADHD and autism traits, making it hard to know which challenges come from movement difficulties specifically. This study set out to understand the unique impact of coordination difficulties on quality of life and how people cope with stress.

✓ What did we do?

We asked 100 adults (aged 18 to 62) to complete online questionnaires about their coordination abilities, ADHD traits, autism traits, quality of life, and how they cope with stress. We then used statistical methods to work out whether coordination difficulties predicted quality of life and coping styles, even after accounting for ADHD and autism traits.

What did we find?

- **Lower quality of life:** Adults with greater coordination difficulties reported lower quality of life, even after accounting for ADHD and autism traits.
- **More emotional coping:** They were more likely to cope by managing their emotions (for example, trying to accept the situation or look on the bright side) rather than tackling problems directly.
- **More avoidance:** They were also more likely to cope by avoiding or withdrawing from stressful situations.
- **No difference in confidence:** Coordination difficulties did not affect how confident people felt about coping with challenges overall.

→ What does this mean for the DCD community?

These findings show that coordination difficulties matter in their own right for adult wellbeing. They are not simply a side effect of ADHD or autism. This means that when supporting adults who struggle with coordination, it is important to address their movement-related challenges directly. Helping people reduce avoidance and build confidence in everyday physical tasks could improve their quality of life.

This study has not yet been published as a journal article, so the findings and interpretation may be updated in the future.

Find out more: <https://scholars.latrobe.edu.au/srahimigolkh> | Shahin Rahimi-Golkhandan | La Trobe University
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